

Thank God For Lysol
By Alice Kennedy

How does a caregiver spend her days and nights? I pray a lot and cry a lot. I dream of how life used to be before dementia/Alzheimer's Disease entered our home.

I married young. My husband was a kind person. We both worked hard, raised two great boys. We always had a new house to live in, were active in our community and enjoyed life.

My husband was diagnosed with dementia in 2004. Our doctor had the foresight to prescribe Aricept on his 83rd birthday. His condition has gradually deteriorated. He now takes a second drug – Namenda. I think the medicines have helped him greatly. He has a good appetite and sleeps well. He attends a day care center 2 days a week. That has helped him greatly. He participates in the programs and enjoys the company of the other attendees. This also helps me to get out 2 days a week for grocery shopping, doctor appointments, etc.

Recently my health has not been good. I have heart trouble; incontinence and today I learned I have osteoarthritis. My walker is now my friend.

I have had good advice and help from the staff at the day care center and from my friends at the senior center. Recently I have applied for help from the Veterans Affairs Administration. Monetary help from the VA would enable him to attend day care more often.

I have to be the nurse, cook, chauffeur, maid, etc. He cannot handle many chores. He has lost control of some of his body functions, which makes me an expert at bathroom cleaning. When he first got dementia I used to get angry with him. I did not understand how he could forget things so quickly, why he asked the same thing over and over, and why he always questioned everything I said. I have learned to be more calm, not "sweat the small stuff". I do the best I can. Thank god for Medicare, Aricept and oh yes – Lysol.

I don't know if I have inspired anyone or not, maybe my granddaughter. She is thinking about becoming a nurse.

My biggest reward at the end of each day is to hear him say, "I love you, honey. You're a wonderful wife." And the tears flow.